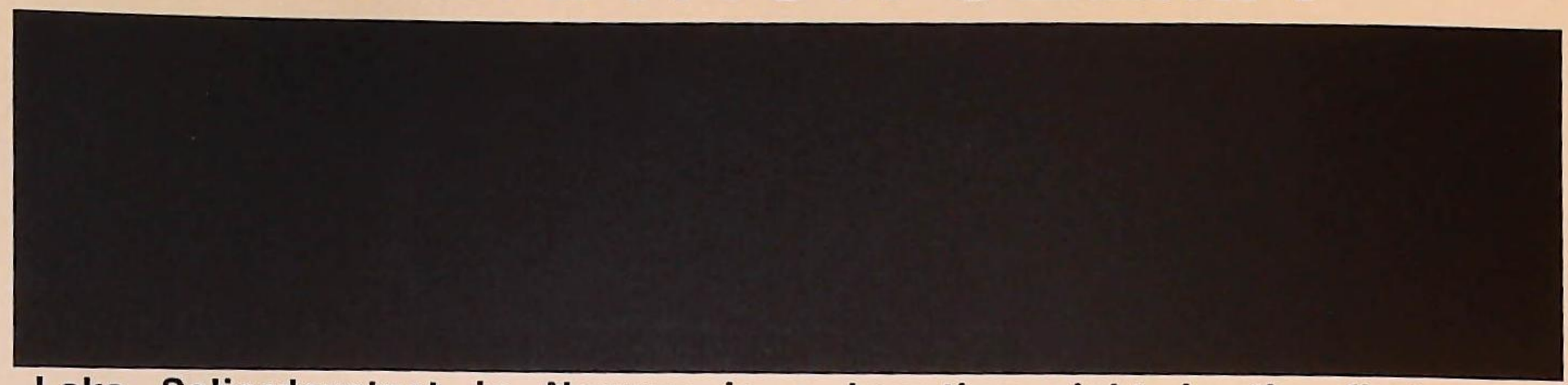
Expedition 1977:

OPERATION SELMA



Lake Seljordsvatnet in Norway is a haunting sight in the first morni light.

At 6.10 p.m. June 28, 1977:
It was calm and still warm from the slowly descending sun and almo as smooth as a mirror on Lake Seljordsvatnet, County of Telemarken, southern Norway. The lake is Norway´s answer to Loch Ness, an is said to inhabit one or several serpents, talked about and seen for some 200 years.

In the Summer of 1977 I intended to solve the mystery together with good friend Adolf Refvik and a reporter on the newspaper Drammens Tidene, Oystein Molstad-Andresen. Our three week expedition named Operation Selma, had started four days earlier.

This evening we were sitting outside our cabins on Point Sinnesodder looking out over the bay next to the town, one of the most popular haunts for the monster.

Suddenly we saw a row of irregular, humplike objects coming out of water beside a little island named Storholmen, some 800 meters from our observation point. For several seconds we were paralyzed and jus stared: Oystein, his son Pal, daughter Hilda, I myself and an aquntian named Reidar.

With vertical movements, which made the humps shine and glitter in descending sun, the animal moved - we were all convinced that it rea was an animal - towards open water. As soon as we could function normal again, we started to take photographs and film what we saw. Through the powerful telescopic lens on my Super 8 mm movie camera saw the animal quite clearly, despite being against the light.

When the animal had covered some 50 meters, a motorboat showed up and closed in on Storholmen, coming from a camping site on the opposite shore. We held our breath that the animal shouldn´t d and vanish, but it didn´t seem that easily influenced by the bo What happend was that it changed its course and started to move towards land.

The motorboat went on the other side of Storholmen and stopped. Whe the water was smooth again, the animal started to swim away and no it seemed to move with greater speed, some 6-7 knots. It was on a distance of some 700 meters when it sank benearth the waves and wa gone.

The entire observation took just under four minutes. I had managed tc film it for 1 minute and 57 seconds.

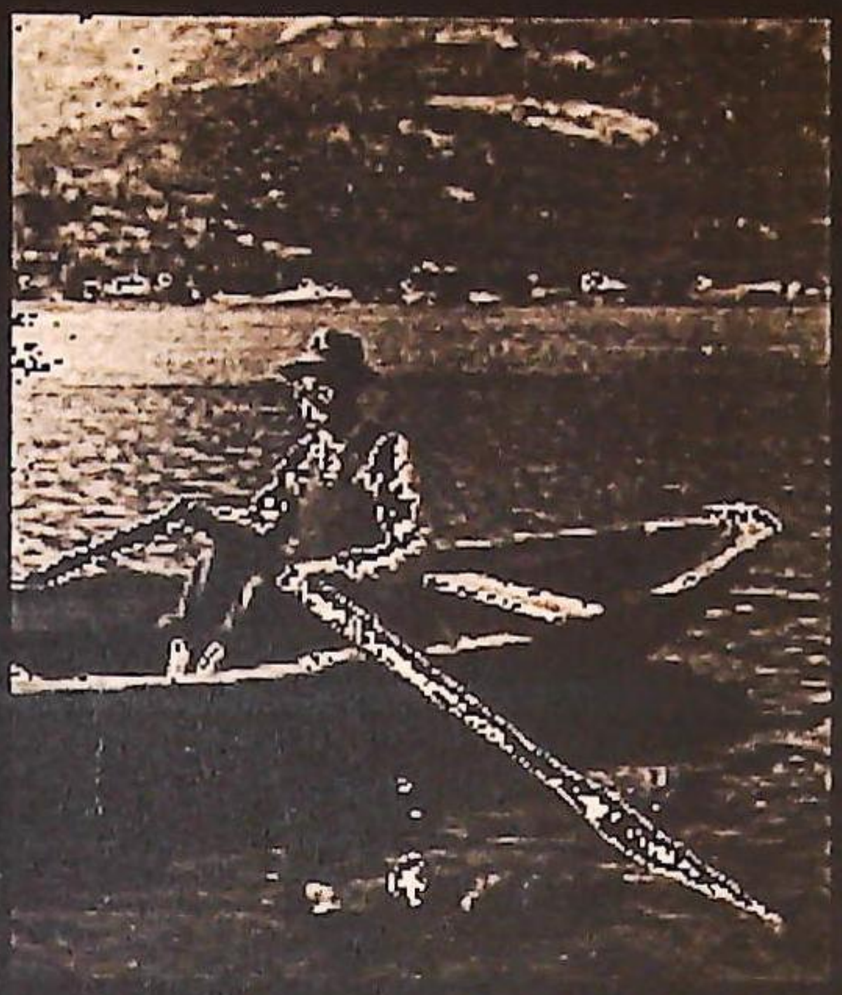
Was it really the serpent of Lake Seljordsvatnet we had seen and filmed? Well, it wasn´t swimming ducks, that´s for sui but we couldn´t fully exclude a beaver. We rowed out to the sp where we had seen the animal, but there was nothing to see. All was peace and quiet on the water and also along the beaches.

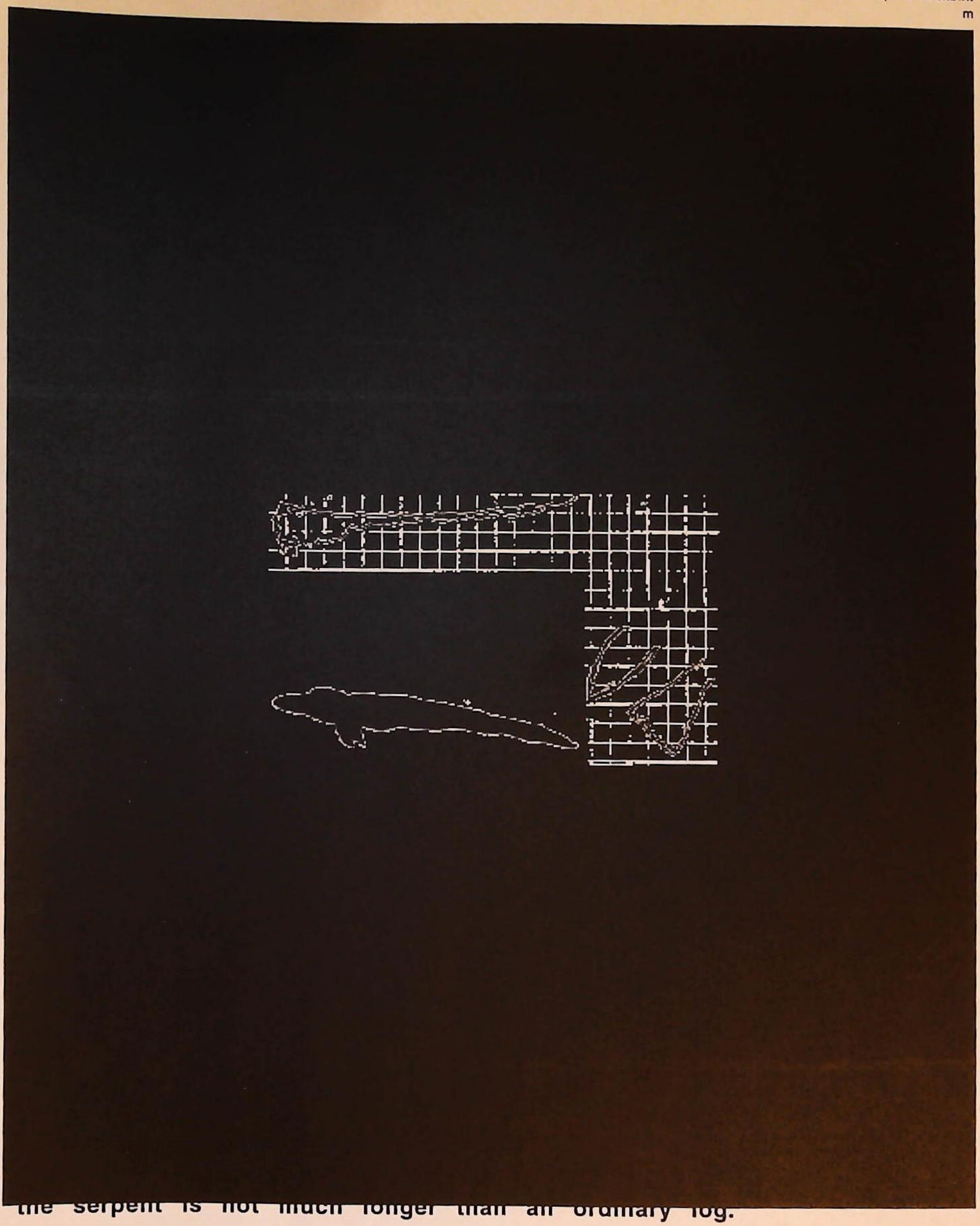
Wouldn´t a beaver have dived when it heard the motorboat? The is beaver in Lake Seljordsvatnet but not in this bay close to the villa It couldn´t have been an otter, this we all agreed about, as the humps were too large, at least half a meter high and one meter long. A so many witness before us we searched for a natural explanation and didn´t really want to belive we had seen the lake´s famo sea serpent.

The Super 8 mm movie of the animal was a technical failure, mostly because I had to film into the descending sun. During the 48 seconds that the animal is visible on flimsy pictures, one can see "something move forward in the water, leaving a wake for 25 seconds.

I have never paid for a through analyze of the film, but always hoped for a second chance, which hasn´t come so far (if I exclude wh happend the year after our expedition, but more about that later on). Oystein Molstad-Andresen´s pictures couldn´t prove anything either. The distance was far to great. What we had seen in th water was both blurred and out of focus on his pictures.

Maybe next time..

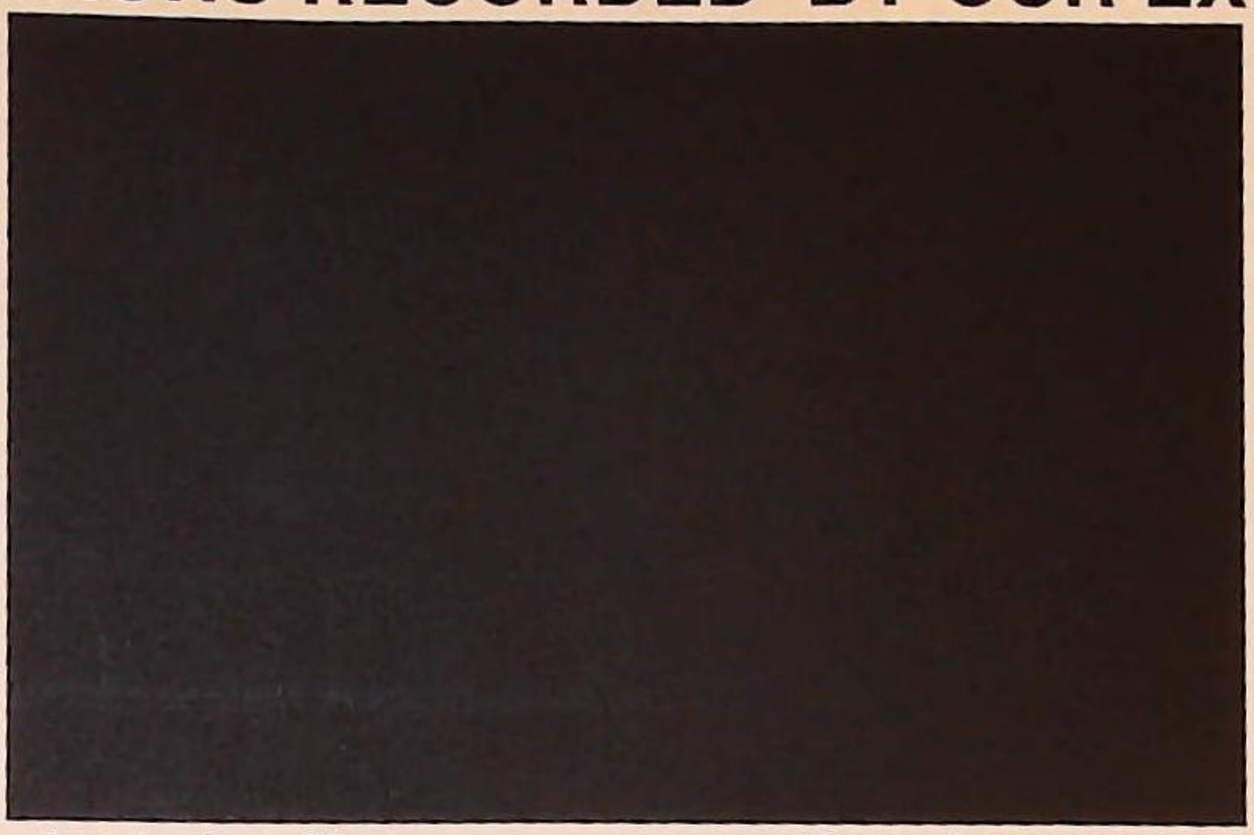




the serpent is not much longer than an ordinary log.

Seeing is believing:

OBSERVATIONS RECORDED BY OUR EXPEDITION

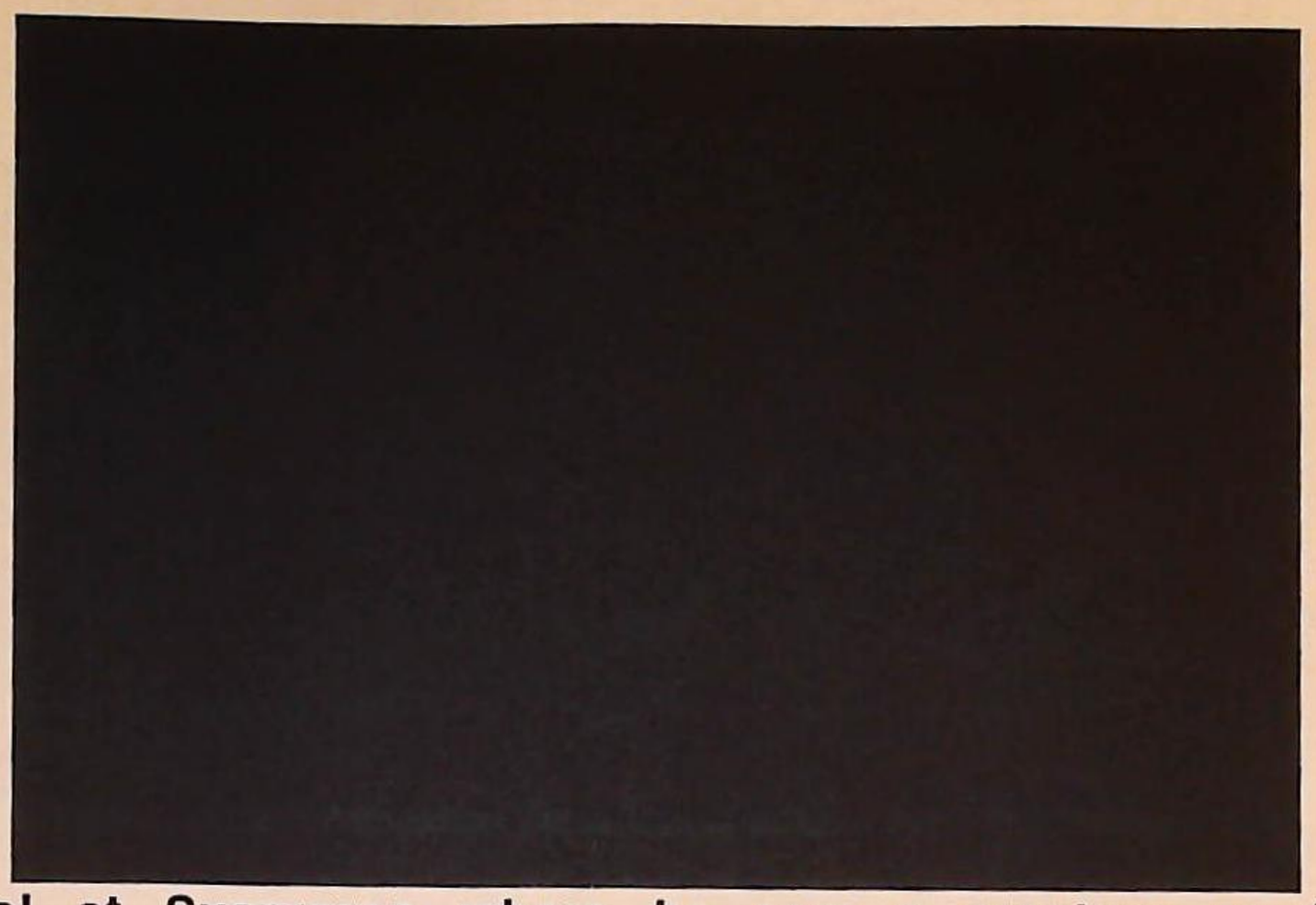


Lake Seljordsvatnet in Norway are nestled between high mountains c all sides.

Expedition 1977 recorded a number of valuable witness accounts. The: are both on tape and on video and the witnesses are all photographed. Most of them had an excellent memory and were also able to provide u with drawings of what they had seen. The witnesses in this page are everyone I interviewed, but the most interesting. I have done all the interviews myself, seen all the places were it happend and drawn certain conclusions presented in the last page. I hope that our resear will help other researchers elsewhere.

May 1963:

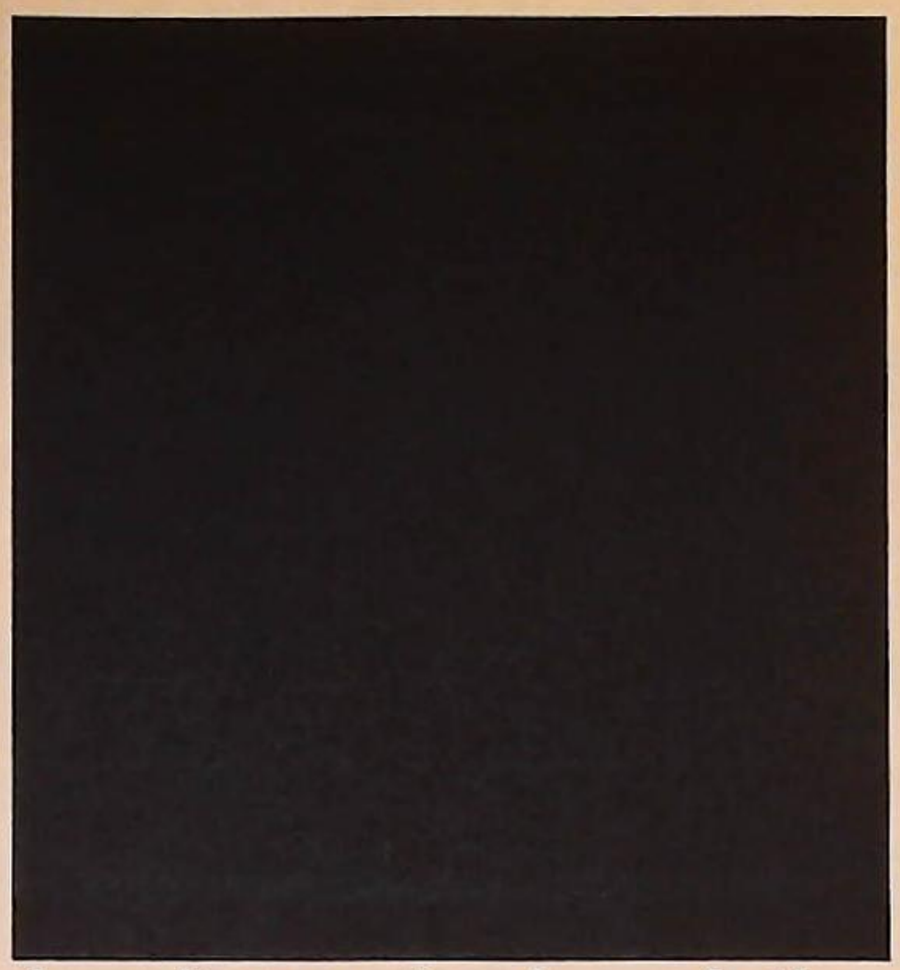
" THE HEAD OF A LIZARD"



Torje Lindstol at Svarvaren where he saw a creature reminding him of giant lizard.

It was 10 a.m. on a fine and sunny day in May 1963 when farmer Torje Lindstol sat on his tractor, pulling timber close to Svarvaren on the shore of Lake Seljordsvatnet. When he happend to glance towards the water, he saw something on a distance of some 100 meters that seeme to be on its way of getting onto the beach.

Torje jumped off his tractor and ran towards it. First he thought it must have been a moose, and looked around for a tree to climb if it turned out to be an angry bull. But when he came as close as 40-50 meters, he saw that it was a completely unknown animal. "I was quite surprised when I couldn´t identify it. When I looked closer I sa a greyish-brown, lizard-like head with large, round eyes", said Torje Lindstol.



Torje Lindstols witness drawing of the animal he saw.

The lizard-like head was as large as a deer´s, the neck at least one meters long and some 20 cm in diameter. The unknown animal stoc up in the water, motionless. "After a couple of minutes it bowed its head forward and dived into the water with a big splash", Torje Lind continued. "All I could see was a large ring on the surface and great waves rolling towards the shore. It was a very exciting observation".

July 6, 1975:
"A SERPENT WITH FOUR FINS"

Olav Juvskas was rural postman in the 70´s and on a daily basi trafficked Kilen-Seljord with mail for people along the entire lake. O his many rounds he had never seen anything strange in the water. But one of his days off, Sunday, July 6, 1975, he saw something in the lak that he will never forget.

"It was 5 p.m. in the evening. I came in my car along Bjorgeberget mountain when I saw something rolling around in the water, a copule hundred meters from the shore", he said during the interview in 1977. stopped the car and lowered a window".

What the postman saw made him quite surprised. A 13-15 meters long serpentlike animal with four fin-like appendices along its body, was tumbling around in the lake making the water splash around it. A sma head on a long neck was sticking out of the water a short distance fr the body. Olav Juvskas was so stunned from seeing the serpent, that h couldn´t remember any details.

The only thing he does remember was that the animal had a lighter be then the dark back. "I had watched it for a couple of minutes when it sank straight down and disappeared. Before that happend I just sat th and hoped that anyone else would come by, but no one else passed on t road at that time", ended Olav Juvskas.

July 20, 1976:
"IT WAS FROLICKING IN THE WATER"

Arne Oygarden we considered a very reliable witness who later becan a good friend.

Ten minutes past five in the evening of July 20, 1976, Arne Oygarden was driving down Allmankosbacken on his way to the village. The lake was like a mirror, it was warm and calm. When he came to a curb at the end of the hill, he threw a quick glance towards the lake and there, o 100 meters from the shore, "the serpent was humping around and frolicking in the water".

"Earlier I had laughed at people claiming to see the serpent. I had als said, that if I one day sees it myself I will belive in it and that was precisely what happend this day", said Arne Oygarden. "I braked my ca and jumped out of it".

The 15-20 meters long, shiny body was twisting and moving like a gi snake in the water, according to Arne Oygarden. Its skin appeared to b wrinkled or scaly and the serpent was light on its belly with a bluish-dark back. "It had feet or fins along its sides, four or more", h went on. "It was not like you roll a log around in the water, there was something along the sides of the body".

Arne Oygardens drawing of the strange animal he saw in Lake Seljordsvatnet.

After a short while the animal started to swim towards open water. the same time a flock of ducks came from Storholmen. When the serpe spotted the ducks it turned back towards the shore, wereas the birds became so frightend that they took off with flapping wings and high-pitched screems.

May 30, 1977:

"A SMALL HEAD ON A LONG NECK"

Ivar Hesmyr refused to return to the lake in a boat after his terrifyi encounter.

1977 the serpents in Lake Seljordsvatnet had their high season and it started already on Whit Easter Monday, May 30.

Ivar Hesmyr, his daughter Solveig, 13, and the neighbour´s son Ragnar Johnson, 11, was on the lake in the afternoon to fish with an otter board, when suddenly three humplike objects rose out of the w only some 150 meters away. "I hadn´t doubted the serpents existence, but I had never thought it would show up so close to me", said Ivar Hesmyr. "After the humps came a small head on a long neck. Then the animal started to move away from us".

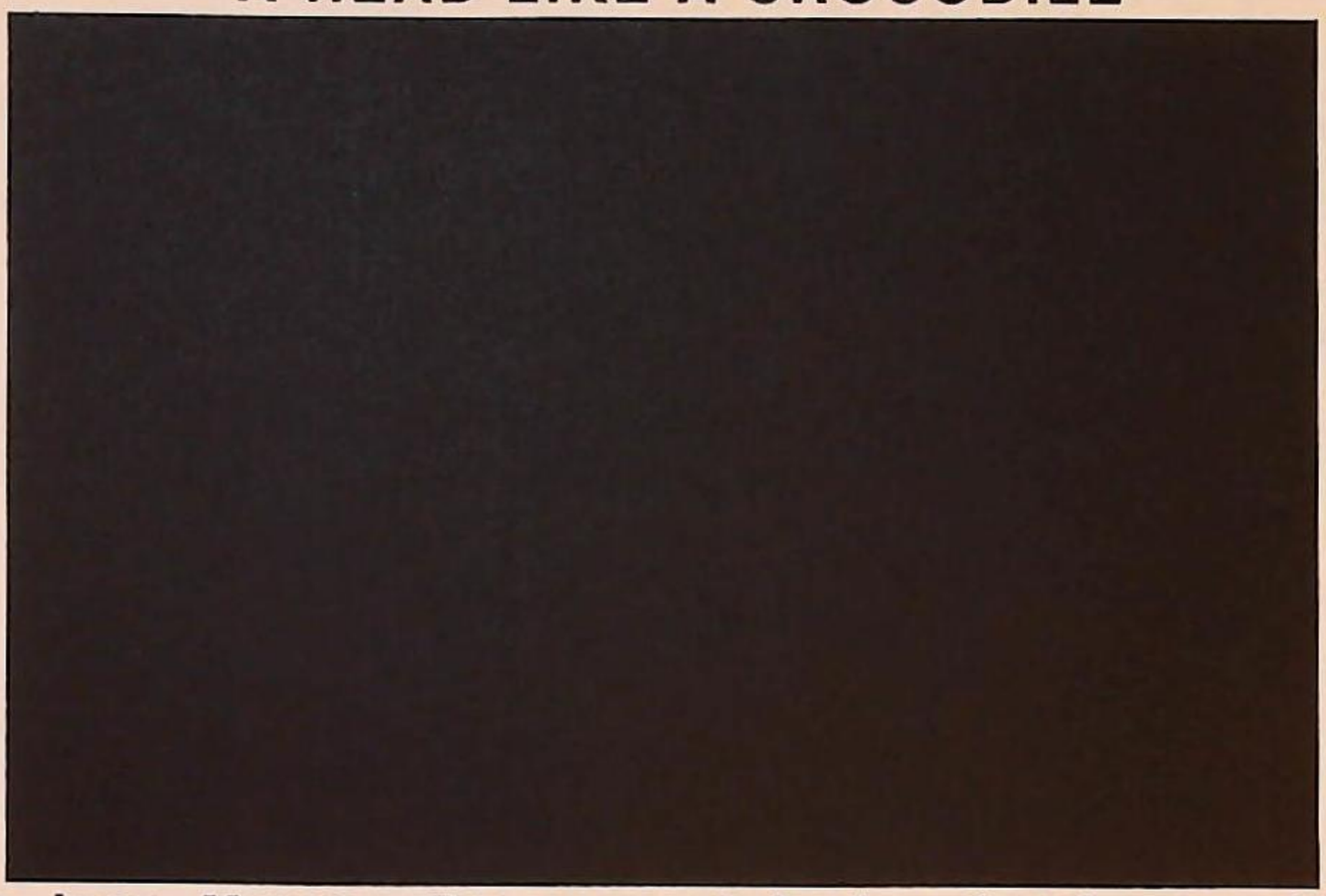
When the 8-10 meters long, serpent-like animal pulled its head out o the water, it was turned away from the witnesses. Ivar Hesmyr noted some kind of "protuberances" on both sides of the head. The only thin he could compare them with was cat-ears seen from behind.

Witness drawing by Ivar Hesmyr.

"When the animal picked up speed it boiled up a lot of foam in front c it", he went on. "My daughter was so scared that she screemed. I turne toward her to calm her down, and when I looked again the animal was gone". 11-year-old Ragnar, who watched it all the time, said that it slowly sank into the water. The humps went first, then the neck and finally the head.

Ivar Hesmyr began to tremble once he came back on the shore, realizir it had been a quite terrifying experience. "I will never go on that lake again in a boat", he concluded.

June 15, 1977:
"A HEAD LIKE A CROCODILE"



According to Inga Myrann the serpent had a head resambling a crocod

Half a month later the serpent surfaced again and this time two witnesses had the luck to see it pretty close.

It was 6 a.m. in the morning, June 15, 1977, when Inga Myrann was driving from Skien to Seljord in her taxi. At a place where the road g close by the lake, she suddenly saw something peculiar swimming alc the beach. "First I thought it was a beaver, but then I saw that it was quite large head with big nostrils", said Inga Myrann. She drove close and stopped the car.

When she looked down into the depth, now only three meters away fro the lake, a shiver went through her body. A head large as a calf and looking like the head of a crocodile, with unusually large nostrils,

turned upwards and stared at her with large, round eyes. A couple of seconds later it bent forward and was gone.

Inga Myrann compared what she saw with the head of a crocodile.

"While I remained for a while I saw bubbles rise where it had disappeared and could follow them to where it went on", she continue "When the bubbles disappeared behind a point, I went back to my car a drove up to next bay to look for the animal, beliveing it would show u again". Inga Myrann was right. The strange animal stuck up its head again and what she had just seen repeated itself. When the serpent dived for the second time it didn´t come back.

"My God, I wished I had a camera when it was at its closest", said Ing Myrann finally, adding it was an observation of a lifetime.

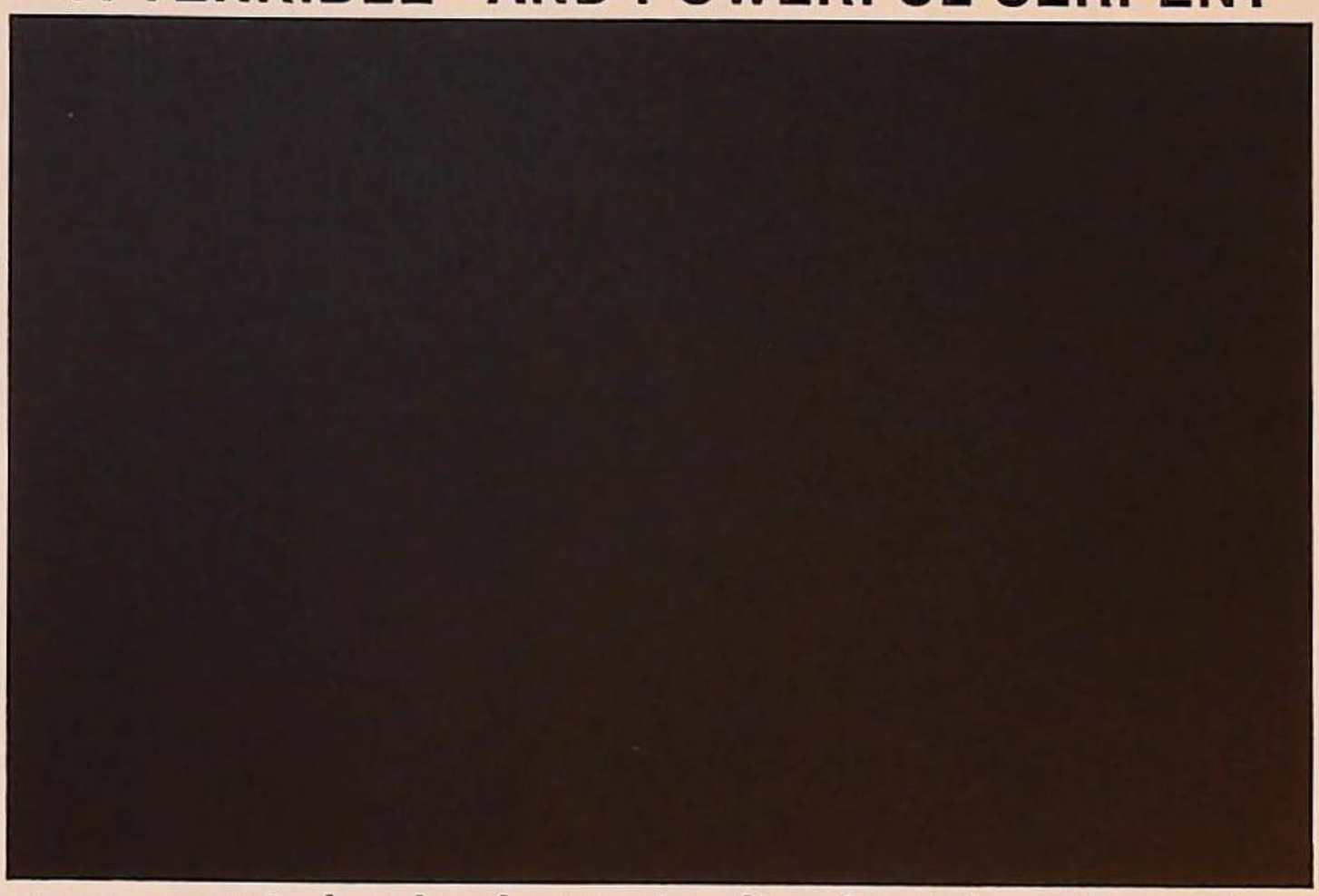
In the afternoon on that same day, Sigurd Oygarden and a six year old daughter of a neighbour, was driving along the western shore of the lake. They had come to the end of Allmankosbacken when Sigurd saw something strange on the lake. A small, greyish head on a long neck. the serpent!", he thought, braked and stopped the car.

"The head of an animal on a neck half a meter long was ploughing through the water at high speed, leaving a wake of foam. It had such a special appearance that I´ve never seen anything like it", he sa "The neck was slightly bent forward. When it increased its speed ever more, the water was splashing up all around it and it caused very hig waves".

Witness drawing by Sigurd Oygarden.

Sigurd Oygarden lives only a couple of hundred meters from the place where he saw the serpent. Beliving he would have time to get his camera he drove home to get it, but when he returned to the road a couple of minutes later the animal was gone. "After that day I always drive around with my camera in the car", he ended.

July 5, 1977:
"A TERRIBLE AND POWERFUL SERPENT"



Olav Aasen wont back down to its length, 30 meters or more.

Like it had been our destiny not to see the mysterious creatures of L Seljordsvatnet up close, we missed the best observation of them all the summer of 1977, when the serpent choose to bask in the sun right

In the afternoon of the July 5, Olav Aasen and his wife Hjordis were visited by their good friends Kari and Selmer Olsson from Kvitseid, v had decided to spend some of the summer at Lake Seljordsvatnet. As t weather was unusually fine with F 110 in the shade, Olav suggested that they should go down to Sinnesodden, get some sun and have a pic on the rocks.

When they had parked on the ridge of Allmankosbacken, Hjordis as a j said to her husband that they should bring their binoculars in case th serpent would show itself. Olav smiled at the memory when I interviewed him. "The binoculars enlarges 12 x 50 and I took it as she said. I wouldn´t regret that! We had hardly sat down on a rock the beach when the serpent turned up".

The distance to the violently splashing animal was some 250 meters. But Olav Aasen saw it clearly in his binoculars and what he saw frightend him. "No one can get me out on Lake Seljordsvatnet in a boa he told me. "The serpent was at least 30 meters long and must have ha a tremendous power. First one hump came up, then a larger one, quite some distance from the first, shortly followed by a long body ending a neck and a head".

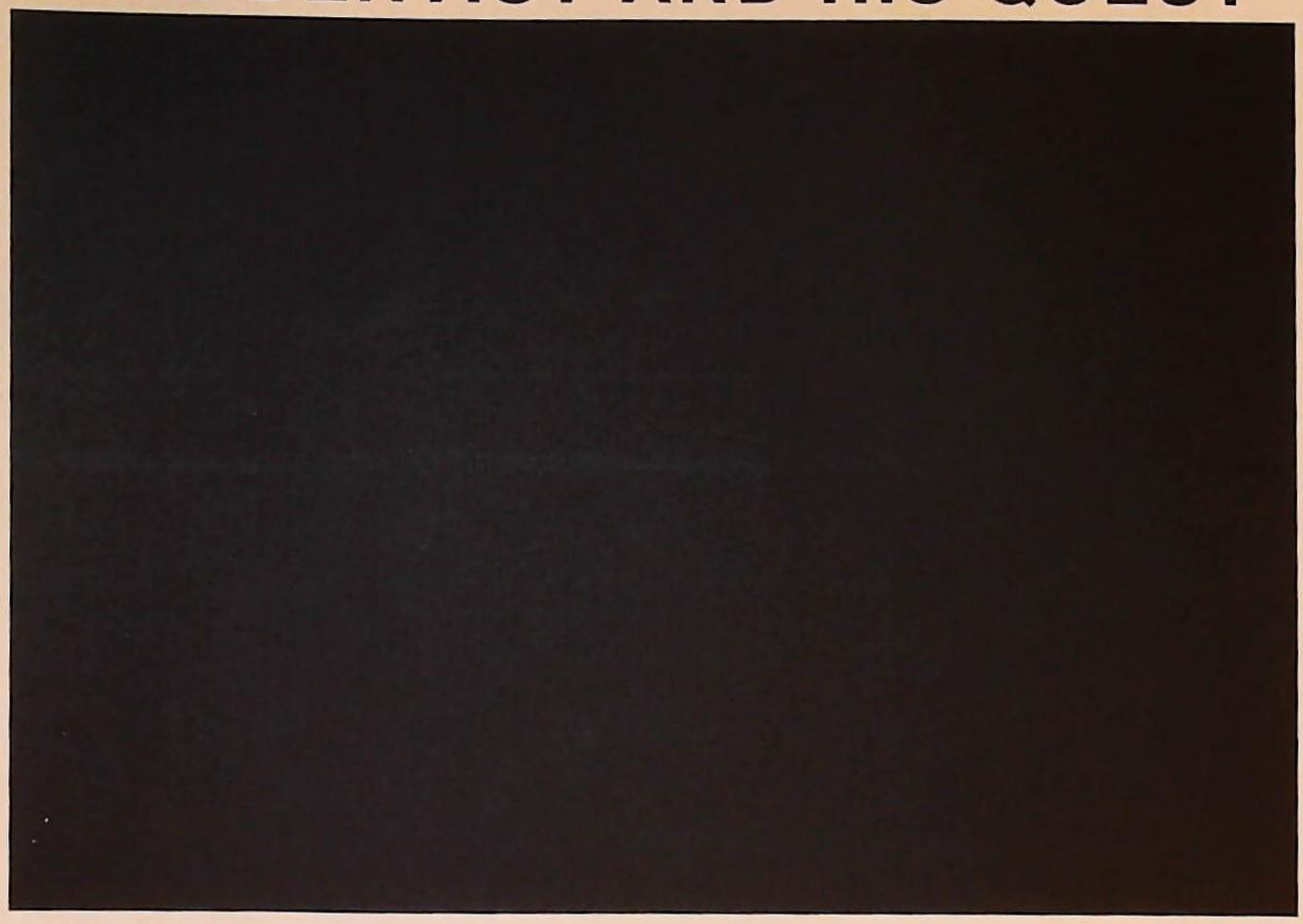
When it dived and stretched its body, waves rolling into she shore w as high as half a meter, according to Olav Aasen. The four witnesses said that they saw air between the "humps", something that seem to confirm the theory that this is really about giant sserpents.

In his strong binoculars Olav Aasen also saw what no one has seen before him: the serpent´s humps had bone-like, 10-15 cm long spines! "People are free to belive what they want, but the serpent ha crooked spines on its back. This would also explain why so many peop had their fishing net torn to pieces", Olav Aasen concluded.

(Map are Copyright of Geografiske Oppmålning, NGO, Norway. Crocodile drawings are Copyright Bokorama/Förlags AB Wiken, Sweden. All othe drawings and pictures are Copyright Jan-Ove Sundberg).

Other searchers:

THE DENTIST AND HIS QUEST



We were not the first trying to solve the riddle in Lake Seljordsvatn In September 1969 technical equipment was used to find the elusive serpents. Diving brothers Arne and Alf Thomassen from Arendal in southern Norway searched with echosounder and underwater cameras.

Right outside Sinnesodden they discovered a number of mysterious grooves in the bottom mud, suggesting that something large had drag itself along the bottom at a depth of 15 meters. The grooves were at the most two month old when found, and according to the Thomassen brothers the bottom was far to smooth for this to be traces of a slid

Half a year later Arne Thomassen was back to the lake and placed four underwater cameras around Sinnesodden. They were triggered by an echosounder as soon as a larger object passed on a distance of maxim five meters. The cameras were triggered several times, but no serpen was visible on the pictures.

Dentist Rolf Langeland came to Seljord in the summer of 1975 to open his own business. He had been in the village for two days when he upo

driving along the west side of the lake, with his three children in the car, trying to find a nice place to take a swim, suddenly became the witness to four to five large humps on the water. The kids saw them too. He stopped the car right in the center of the road, to alert others but no one else chose to pass at the time.

What he saw had high speed and sprayed a lot of foam as it shot through the water. Rolf Langeland estimated the animal to be between 30-50 meters long (which, certainly, seems an impossible length).

In the summer of 1976, Langeland organized a fourteen-day lookout by the lake. A group of ten people watched the lake in shifts in what was called "Operation Summerbird", based on Point Sinnesodden.

In an interview with a weekly magazine Langeland later stated: "It was hard to see, but it was almost harder to have seen it. There´s so much else coming in the wake of the sea serpent, like press, radio, TV and the same questions over and over again and scoffing comments. It had been much less complicated if I hadn´t seen what I saw".

Amateur photographer Jon-Erik Lunde from Oslo, who participated in Operation Summerbird, had been very close to get a clear shot of the serpent one day when on watch, seeing "a torpedo shaped object" in the water only some 100 meters from the shore. He took three pictures but all he got was waves. The same afternoon he saw three humps on a distance of 500 meters and again failed to document them.

In July the same year Arne Thomassen returned again to investigate the bottom outside Sinnesodden. With strong underwater lights he entered a depth of 30 meters, but all he found was sunken timber and thick mud. He returned in September together with his collegue Sigurd Horthem.

On both sides of the Jutul bridge, a underwater mound of stones some one hundred meters out in the lake, it was very deep. A lead-line 120 meters long was not enough. When Arne Thomassen later investigated a stretch of 30 meters, at Brureskaret, he found a strange "path" on the bottom which turned towards the depth. All rocks had been swept aside "like something big had dragged itself through".

(Picture are Copyright Jan-Ove Sundberg).

SIMRAD´s evaluation caused a sensation:

MONSTER HUNTERS AND CELEBRATED PIONEERS

On 5 July 1977, we started to investigate Lake Seljordsvatnet with o echosounder.

Simrad EL-38 was the most sophisticated on the market in those days It had been supplied to us by Simrad in Horten outside Oslo. The sophisticated echosounder could separate single fishes from a shoal fish, dead objects such as sunken timber, which turned up as a straig line on the strip (drawn by a printer) and living objects, which turne out like a crooked line on the paper (so called "banana").

Simrad, which was and still is one of Europe´s largest compan in this business, had earlier experiences from similar, very specializ investigations. An echosounder of a similar type, Basdic, was used in 1962 by Cambridge University in England, at an expedition to Loch Nes looking for "Nessie".

It was 8.30 p.m. on the night of July the 5th, when we shut off the engine of our small plastic boat, lowered the transducer into the bay Lake Seljordsvatnet and turned on the echosounder.

We had an immediate contact!

A living object, as Adolf Refvik judged to be quite large, and which

hardly could be a fish, was registrered on a distance of 300 meters al on a depth of 60-70 meters in the northern part of the deep bay. The object followed the shoreline and covered the entire, four kilometers long bay, in quite a short while.

At 8.53 it suddenly changed course and speed. Adolf Refvik was very excited when he told me: "Its coming straight at us!".

It closed in to fast for comfort and I thought about all witness descriptions we had heard: "30 meters long", "looked like a crocodile "had to be very powerful", "crooked spines on its back". At that mom I realized that our small boat would be crushed like an eggshell if it chose to attack us!

The echosounder continued to draw the object and its position. When was only some 10 meters away from the boat, it suddenly stopped and remained motionless. This was probably the most uncanny moment of the whole incident. Next it turned around and headed for the open lake The relief we felt can´t be described in words.

We never thought of leaving the lake. But hot, black, strong coffee ou of the thermos tasted wonderful after this first frightning encounte I´m not ashamed to say that what ever was down there had scar me out of my wits, but fortunately I soon stratightend up again, telli myself these creatures wasn´t hostile just curious.

It was only 9.17 when we once again had contact with a large, living object. This time it was 20 meters away. It soon behaved very much l the first one we had encountered and headed stright for us. Again it stopped some 10 meters away, turned and vanished. At both these contacts the depth was between 15 and 20 meters.

Between 10.30-11.45 a.m. the next day we had new contacts with large objects moving in the depth in the open lake. We also registered shoa of fish and found that the fish seemed to stay at a depth of 30 meters

At 7.05 a.m. in the morning of July 7th we were out in the middle of t lake. Suddenly we were in contact with something enormous, which seconds later split into two parts! For three minutes the two objects moved on a parallell course until we lost contact. But only five minu later, the echosounder registered three different objects on a parall course. Shortly thereafter they separated and went towards the botto at various speed.

Was this proof of sea serpents swimming together?

Of the last three objects one seemed to be smaller then the others. W it parents with a baby serpent? No one will ever know. All we could d then and still can is speculate.

We investigated Lake Seljordsvatnet for some 40 hours and only left a few areas around the big islands unexplored. In the 157 meters deep "hole" at Igletveittj we had the strongest recording of them all. Wha was recorded there was an enormous object which stood 20 meters above a pointed, staircase-looking top on the bottom.

The echosoundings took place between July 5th and 9th. We had all together 14 contacts with large, moving objects, alone or in pairs, sometimes up to three at the same time, which seemed to behave "intelligently".

On July 13, all strips from the echosounder was sent to Simrad at Horten for evaluation. One week later, in a letter dated July 20, 1977, Mr. H. Skjold-Larsen, Director of the Fishing Division, cautiously said a reply:

**"Concerning echosoundings from Lake Seljordsvatnet.
We have received your readouts from investigations in Lake Seljordsvatnet, where you have used a Simrad EL-38 B-echosounder eqiuped with a ceramic transducer, 38-22-F.**

If the information we have received from you is to be trusted, that th boat has been motionless and the transducer have been used in a horisontal position as a sonar during the recording, we can confirm an object passed the boat.

The duration of the contact is 41 or 80 minutes, depending on the ran of the echosounder. It is impossible to know what speed the object h since we don´t know if it moved in a straight line or in a curv. is also impossible to say what size and shape it had, as we know nothing of its composition. We can neither say what depth it moved o as we don´t know what tilting angle the transducer had during the contact. The recording, however, is very consistent and is derive from an echo of constant strength".

This letter hit like a bomb in Norwegian media and we were besieged press, radio and TV. The Norwegian National Environmental Protection Agency, which at the time had a president by the name of Gro Harlem

Brundtland, later to become the prime minister of Norway, said that had done "pioneering work" at Lake Seljordsvatnet and this made us proud.

We also were on the lookout.

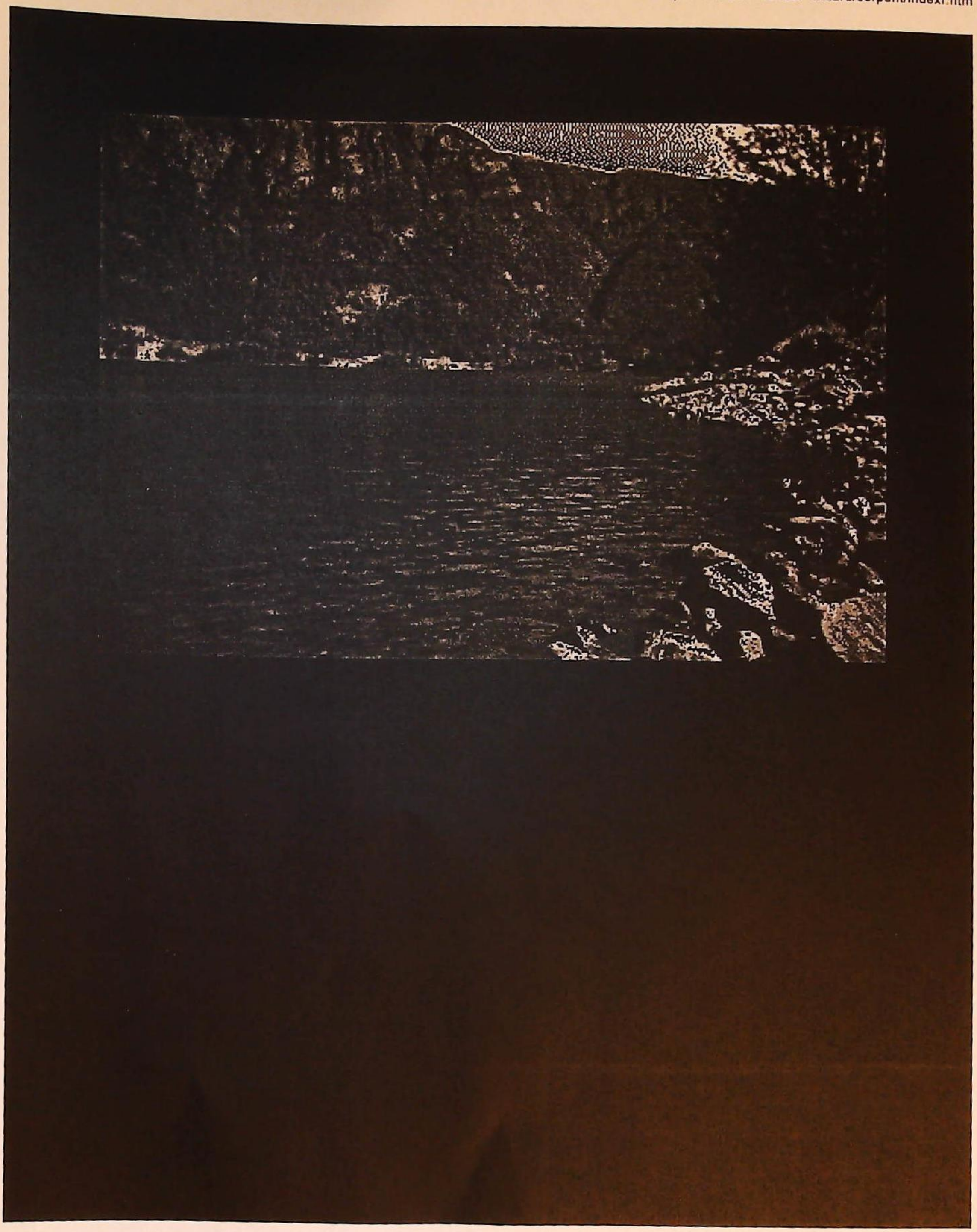
Endless hours we drifted around in our boat in various parts of the la from early morning to late at night. It was unusually warm that June and July in the summer of 1977. The weather was on our side, and it seems as lake monsters are more inclined to show themselves when t weather is good. Searching from the boat gave us nothing, however.

Searching from land resulted in my Super 8 mm movie and Oyvinds worthless pictures. Both on June 30 and July 1 we saw something in water outside Sinnesodden, that we could not identify.

On June 30, between 6.17 and 6.18 p.m., we saw a "torpedo-shaped" object just under the surface of the water. It was at least 3-4 meters long. On July 1, the time was between 5.30 and 5.33 p.m. when we saw hazy object on the surface, it took off and vanished. This object too was 3 to 4 maybe 5 meters long.

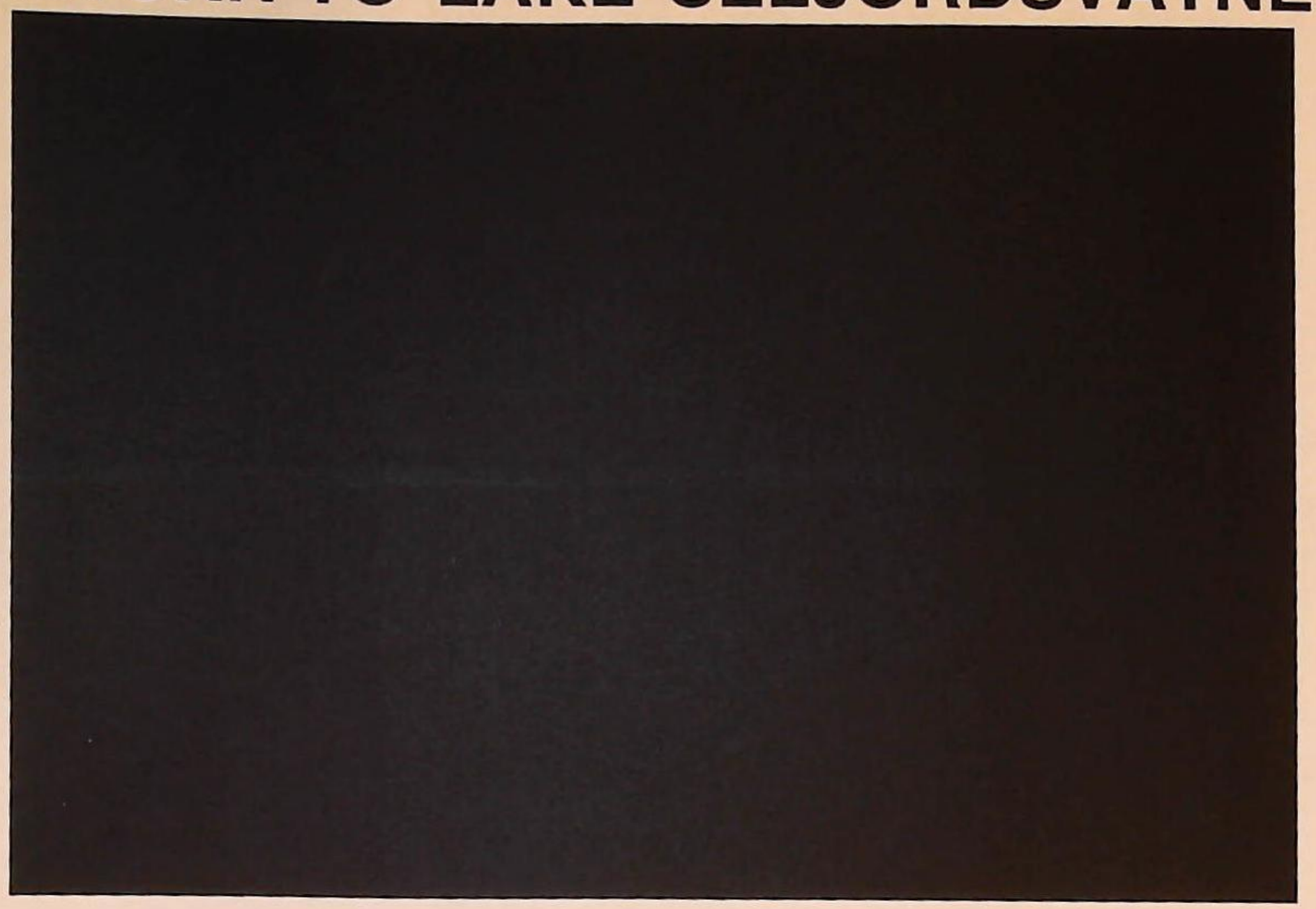
On July 8, we searched from a car. It was five o´clock in the morning when I filmed swimming beavers at Gardvik. First a lone beaver, then two together and still another one with a branch with leaves on its back. It struck me under the filming, that what we had seen earlier was nowhere close to this, but instead had looked like th classic humps.

(Picture are Copyright Jan-Ove Sundberg).



Caught with my pants down:

RETURN TO LAKE SELJORDSVATNET



In 1978 I returned to Lake Seljordsvatnet for a couple of days in July. had to complete some interviews and take pictures of some witnesses had missed during our Operation Selma. I never expected to see something in the water. But it seems these mysterious creatures wil strike when you least expect it!

The summer of 1978 was cold and rainy. Thunder and lightning was rumbling over me during the four days I stayed in the cabin on Sinnesodden, lent to me by the always hospitable Arne Oygarden (who passed away in July 1993).

It was 9.45 p.m. in the evening of July 6, and I sat and warmed myself by the fireplace in the cabin, when I through the window and out on tl lake saw something I can only desribe as "a lizard-like head" on a rather long, thin neck that came swimming towards the shore.

I grabbed my movie camera and dived out through the door. Barefoot I ran over the cold, wet ground and sat down to my knees in the rainsoaken moss. Twilight had begun to set in. I realized that my only chance to get the animal on the film, was to film a piece of the

darkening sky as well.

The animal came to the edge of the beach, rounded a kid´s raft, dived and came up again. I saw it on and off for some 30 minutes. I on saw the head, which I estimate was 25-30 cm long and 30-40 cm abov the surface (including the neck). I took two Super 8 mm movies, but knew all along that it was too dark to record it.

This is a rude scetch of what I saw and filmed in the summer of 197

I wondered if it wasn´t a beaver after all. But that should´ve been scared off and left the area, especially when I threw a rock into the water close by it. This animal came up instead, turned and twisted its head and seemed to look where the rock had co from.When it vanished at 10.15 I first rowed out to where it had been, then I rowed along Sinnesodden and around it, to convince myself tha wasn´t a beaver I had seen.

Back home again I went to Agfa in Stockholm, which tried to rescue n film by increasing the photosensitivity. Excitement was high when w sat down in a showroom to see the developed film. But our disappointment was even greater when all we saw was "something" t came swimming towards the shore, to dissolve into a haze because of the failing light. The sea serpents had again made a fool of me!

In july 1979 Arne Thomassen lovered a hydrophone into a depth of 10 meters in Lake Seljordsvatnet. The equipment was based 40 meters from the shore and sounds from the deep was recorded by a taperecor connected to the hydrophone.

At midnight, when traffic on the nearby roads had stopped, there was number of clicking sounds from the depth. Arne Thomassen dismissed them as fish. But at three o´clock there was suddenly a larger sound. It sounded like a "snorting or growling". The recording was so interesting it was broadcasted on Norwegian radio.

Late in the summer of 1983 still another method was tried out to sol the riddle of the sea serpent. A diving-bell was lovered into the wate

at Styggelid, close to Sinnesoddeb Point. It was enough light inside i but outside the water was like a black wall. No observations could be done with the bell.

On June 5, 1988, Georg Holte Waldenstrom, 26, was standing at Telenessandens camping on the southernmost part of the lake. He was filming with his camcorder when he saw a 20 meters long wave rollir for a couple of hundred meters before it died out. The wave is clearly visible on his video, but as the distance to it was 500-600 meters it impossible to say what caused it.

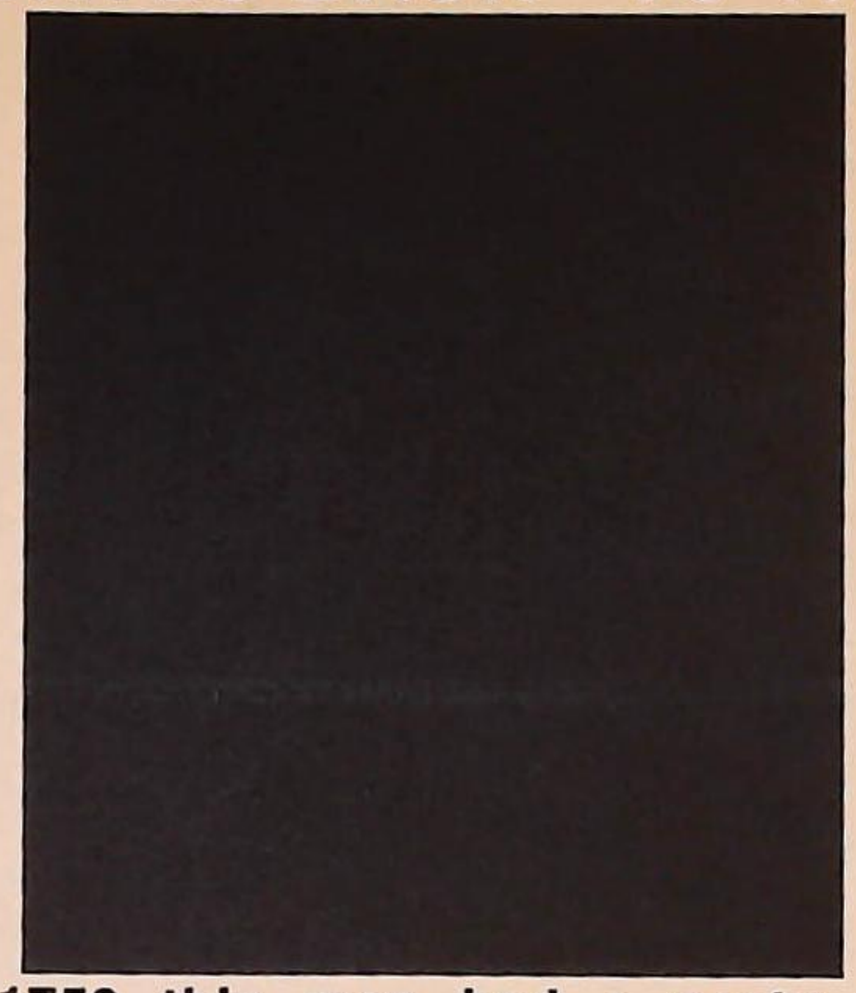
In the summer of 1992, Erik Nordseth from Oslo stopped by Lake Seljordsvatnet, the camcorder ready as he had heard about the sea serpent. He was somewhere midway down the lake when he saw three four, 1,5 meters long humps coming out of the water. They had a spee of 7-12 knots and made large waves on the mirrorlike surface.

"I filmed them for 15-20 seconds and they are clearly visible in my video", said Erik Nordseth later. "They were grey in colour and looked like sharkfins, but were much wider. They sloped upwards in front an ended abruptly at the back. The wake they left was at least one hundr meters long".

He was convinced that what he saw was an unknown animal.

(Drawing and picture are Copyright Jan-Ove Sundberg).

Beware of the Sea Serpents:
SIGHTINGS DATES BACK TO THE YEAR 1750



In the summer of 1750 this man had a nasty encounter on the lake.

Lake Seljordsvatnet is one of the smallest lakes in the County of Telemarken, with its length of 14 km and two km on its widest part. (The county is famous for the secret heavy-water factory during WWI situated in Rjukan, used by the Nazis and later blown up by Norwegian-American elite commandos).

The village Seljord, with some 3 000 inhabitants is situated on the northwestern part of the lake. The shores are sparsely populated, wit the exception for summer cabins here and there.

There are many bays in the lake and two large islands. If you want to see the lake in its entirety you will have to climb any of the surrounding mountains, raising to a height of 500 to 1 600 meters. Midway down the lake, on a place called Igletvittj, there´s a depth of 157 meters. The lake is 50-75 meters deep on the average. To be in Norway this is considered to be a very shallow lake.

The oldest testimony of a mysterious creature in the lake dates back the summer of 1750. Gunleik Andersson-Verpe from Bo, was rowing from Ulvneset to Nes on Garvikstrondi beach in Seljord, with a small boat in tow. Suddenly he was "attacked by a sea horse". This creature "was so obstinate that the boat over-turned". Appearantly Gunleik escaped unharmed.

"After this nasty incident no one dared to row over the lake without being armed with a hook or an axe", say´s Halvor Jod-Sandsdale a poet and author who in 1976 (and in a re-make in 1989) published a book on the serpent or serpents. According to him it must be an anim that can reproduce itself.

Nobody knows what could have brought about the attack in the summe of 1750. But in the years to come the serpent seems to have gotten more peaceful. In modern times Sandsdalen has never heard that they should have bothered or attacked anyone.

In the 1800´s the serpent showed itself to many reliable and thrustworthy villagers. The sceptics dismissed it, claiming it was otters or beaver swimming in a row. But more and more witnesses cai forward and in the year 1880, when observations reached a peak, a fantastic testimony came to light.

A man named Bjorn Bjorge, and his mother Gunhild, were said to have killed a strange-looking lizard, which they said was the serpents offspring. Mother and son had been washing clothes by the beach when lizard-looking creature, about one meter long, came swimming nearby Mrs. Bjorge acted spontanously and was so scared, that she hit it ove its back with a wooden stick, which broke the animal into two. The backpart of the animal slided out into the water and sank, while the hind part was still on the beach.

No one wanted to deal with "the baby of a sea serpent", however, and animal was left to rotten and disperse. "If these people hadn´t been so scared and superstisious, the riddle of the serpents might ha been solved", say´s Halvor Jod-Sandsdalen. "But they were very frightend for the unknown in these days". (I´d say they still is

With the exception of "the lizard" from 1880 (which incidentally reminds us about the three little creatures seen in Loch Ness by Anthony and Anthony; which can be seen at my Nessie site, look for indexd: sightings) there was and is great similarities between the serpents of Lake Seljordsvatnet and so called "horse-eels", snake- or eel-like animals, seen then and still seen in Great Britain and many other countries.

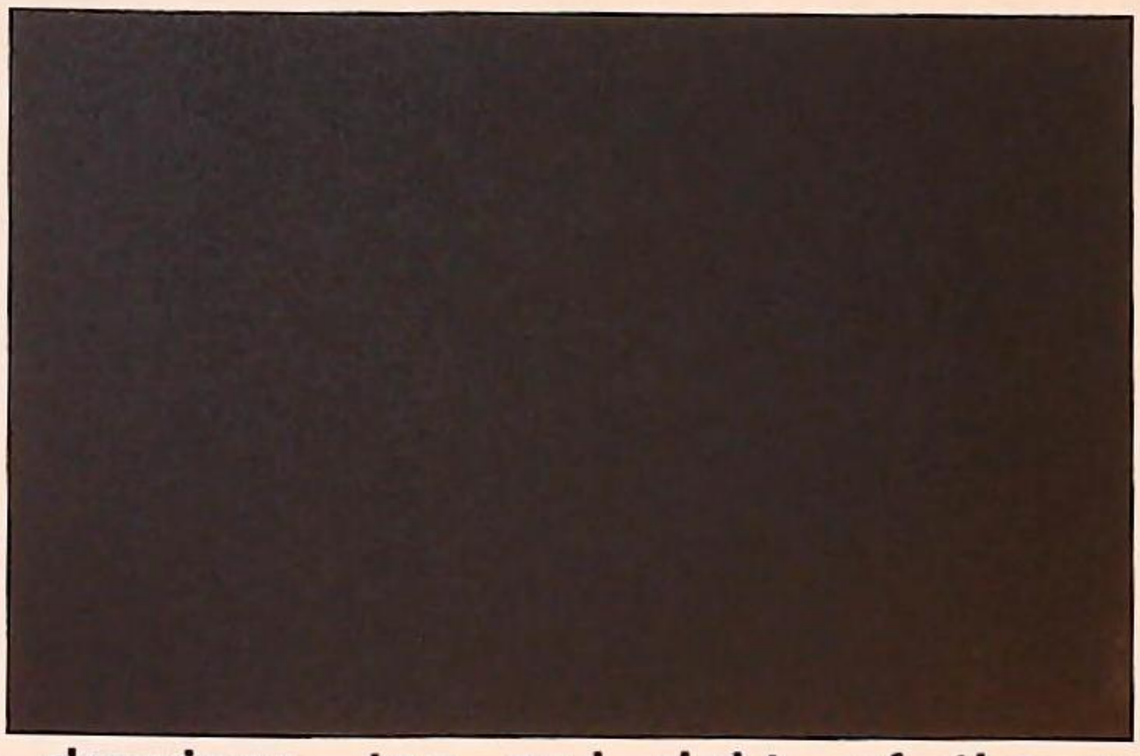
Early one morning in the summer of 1918, with fine weather and a mirror-like surface on the water, Karl Karlsson walked down to the bridge at Sandnes to try his fishing luck. Suddenly he saw an strange animal in the water. It closed in fast. When it came real close Karl

Karlsson was so scared that he threw down his fishing rod and ran.

He described the animals head as that of a horse. It was held about on meters over the surface. When the animal came within 50 meters of tl bridge it stopped, sank straight down and disappeared.

That summer Torgil Bjorge found large "meat-like chunks like from a serpent-like creature" floating on Lake Seljordsvatnet close to Sandr At another occasion he saw an animal on the beach resambling a crocodile, which quickly vanished into a pile of stones.

Two years later, Eivind Fjodstuft went out on Sinnesodden, to fish. It was an unusually warm, calm day with an unbroken surface. When he came to the point he saw a strange animal, on its way out of the lake and onto the cliffs. It turned back when Eivind came towards it "and slided down back into the water".

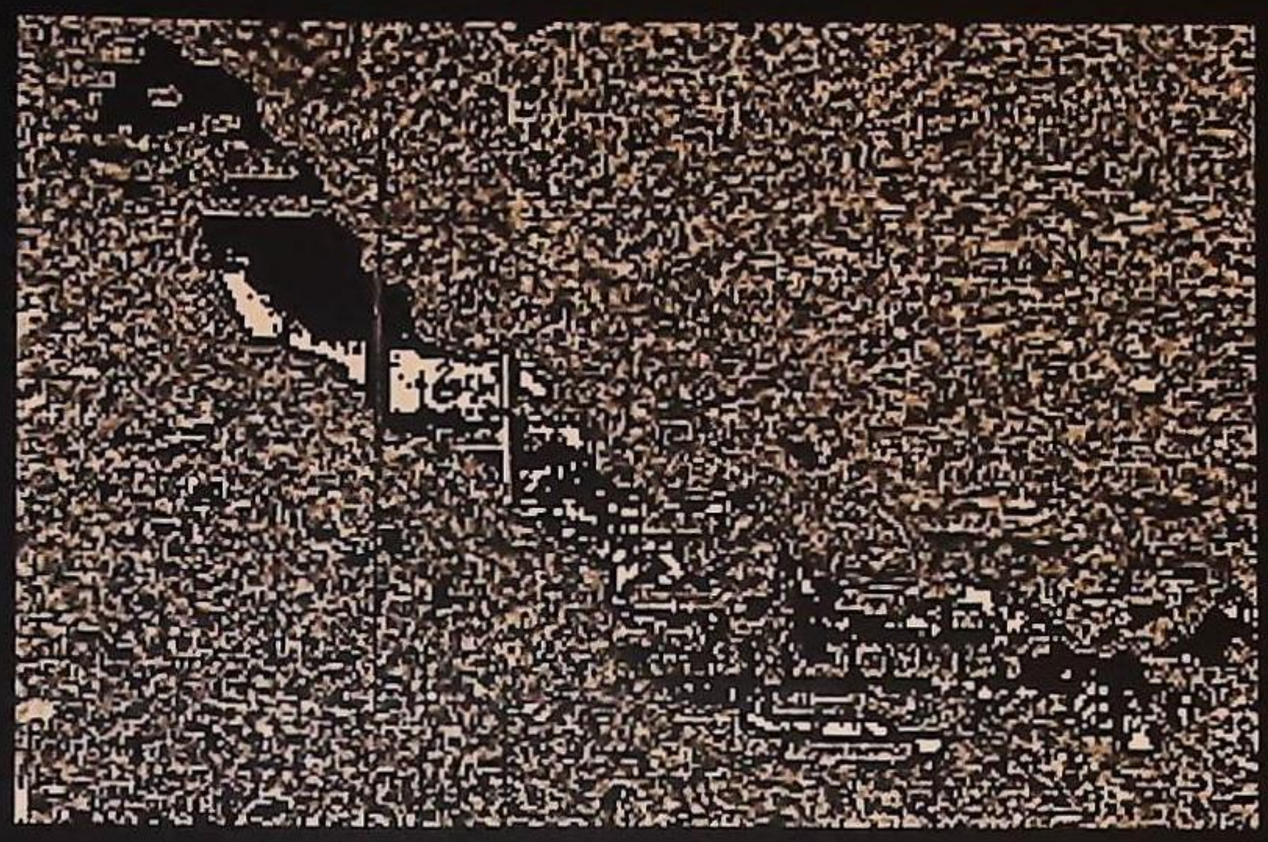


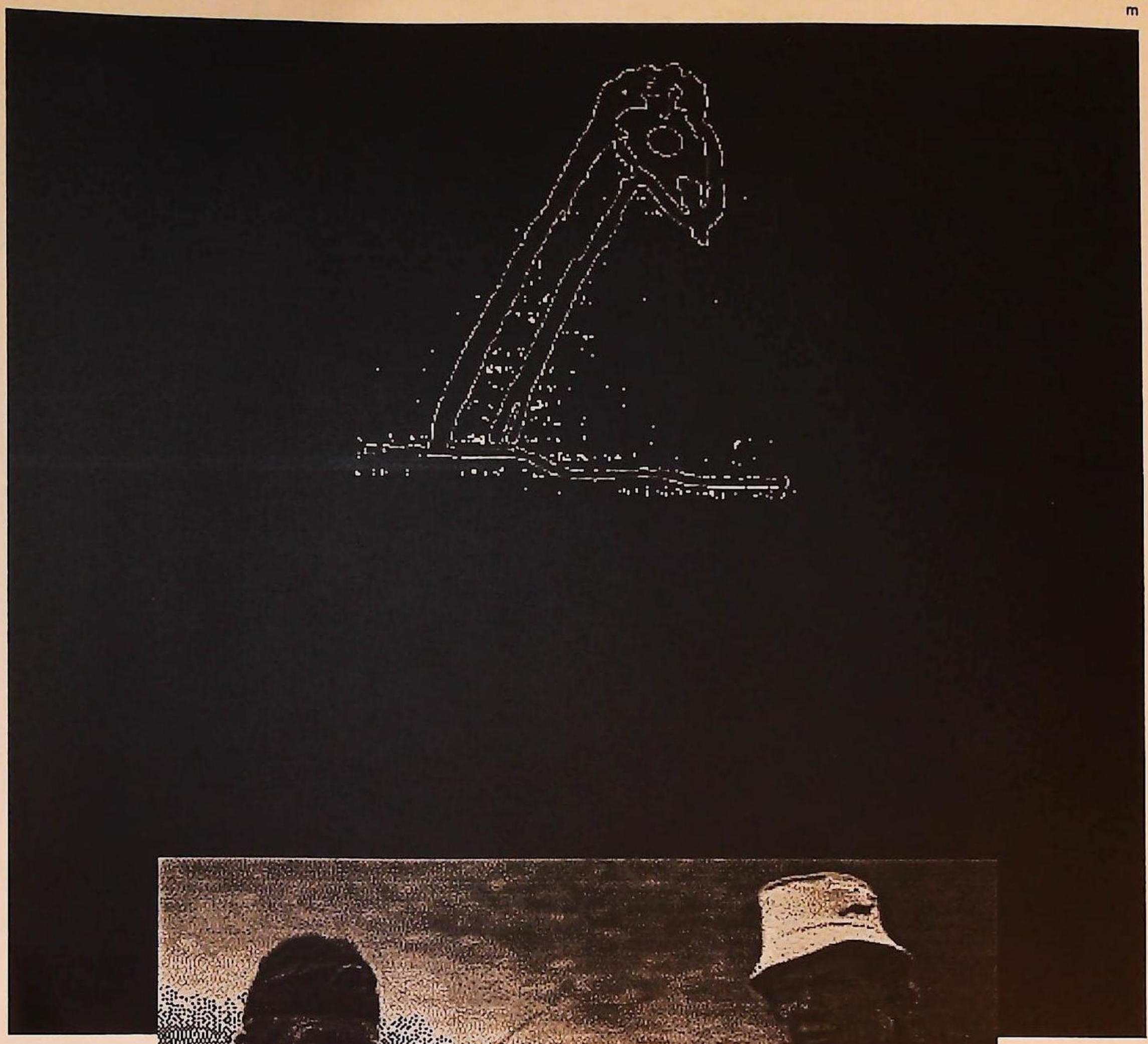
Eivind Fjodstufts drawings, top and right, of the creature he saw co out of the water.
Illustration below left is a reconstruction approved by the witnes:

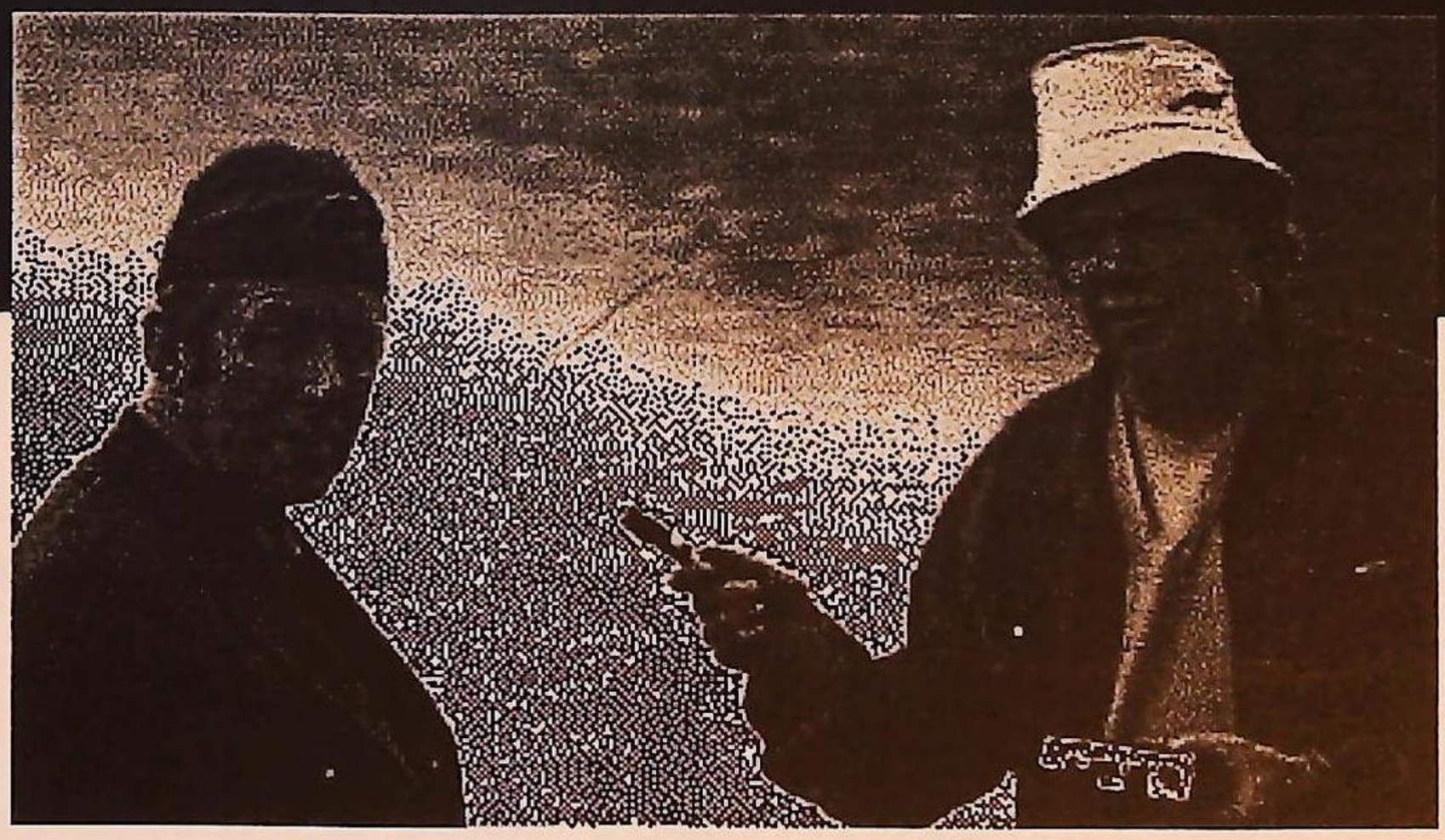
He described the animal as 15-20 meters long, narrowing and with a head resambling the head of a crocodile. The animal was black in colc and had finlike feet at the front part, right below its neck. He saw no eyes or mouth, but the animal turned its head from side to side and seemed to scout and listen. When it discovered Eivind it quickly wen back into the water again.

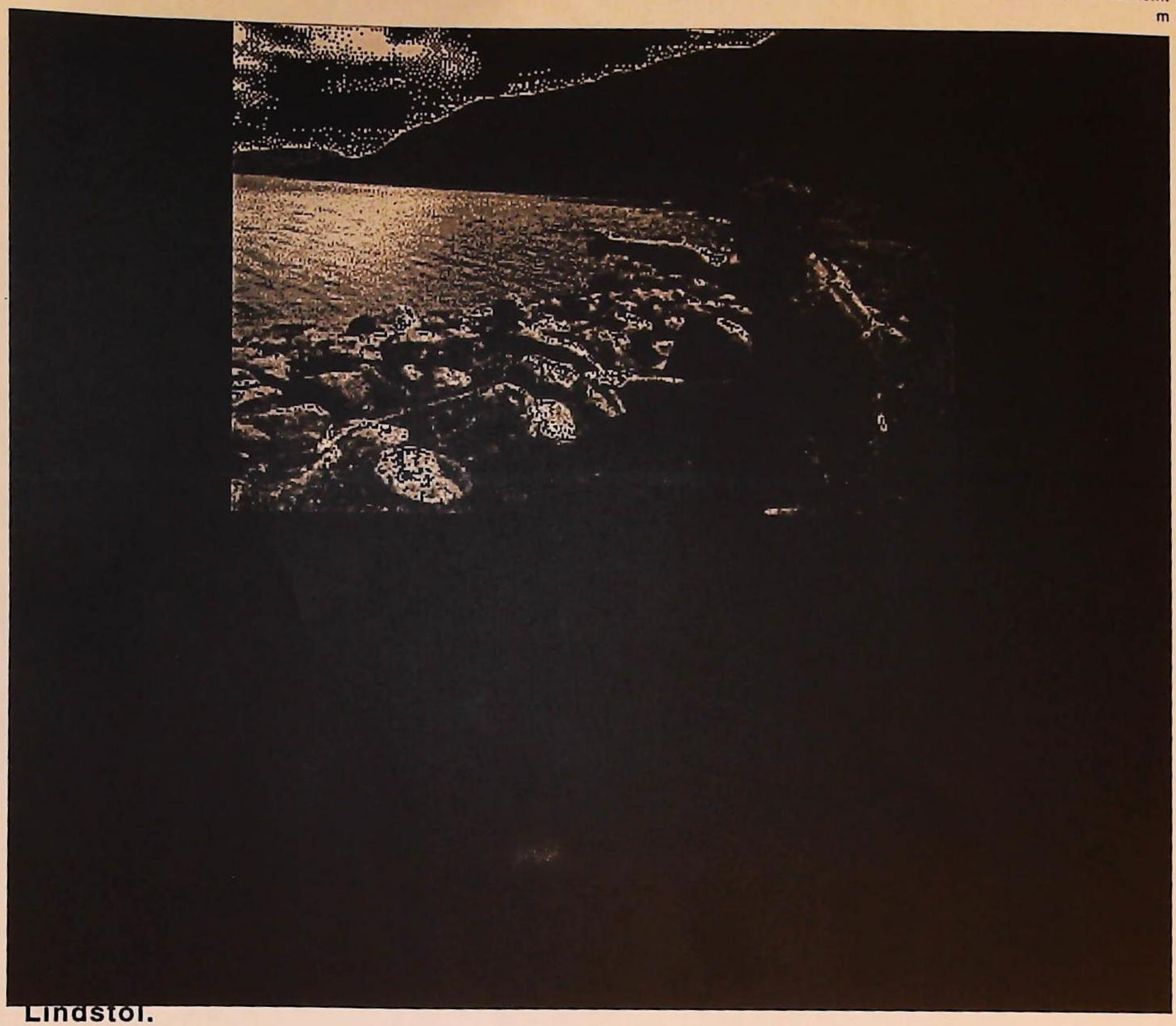
In the 30´s, 40´s and 50´s testimonies are talking about an unknown animal or serpent, humplike in appearance. Descriptions range from three to four humps, the length varies from four-five meters up to 20 and 50 meters. But according to most peopl the serpent is not much longer than an ordinary log.

(Picture are Copyright Noregs Boklag, Norway 1976 and drawing are Copyright Jan-Ove Sundberg).









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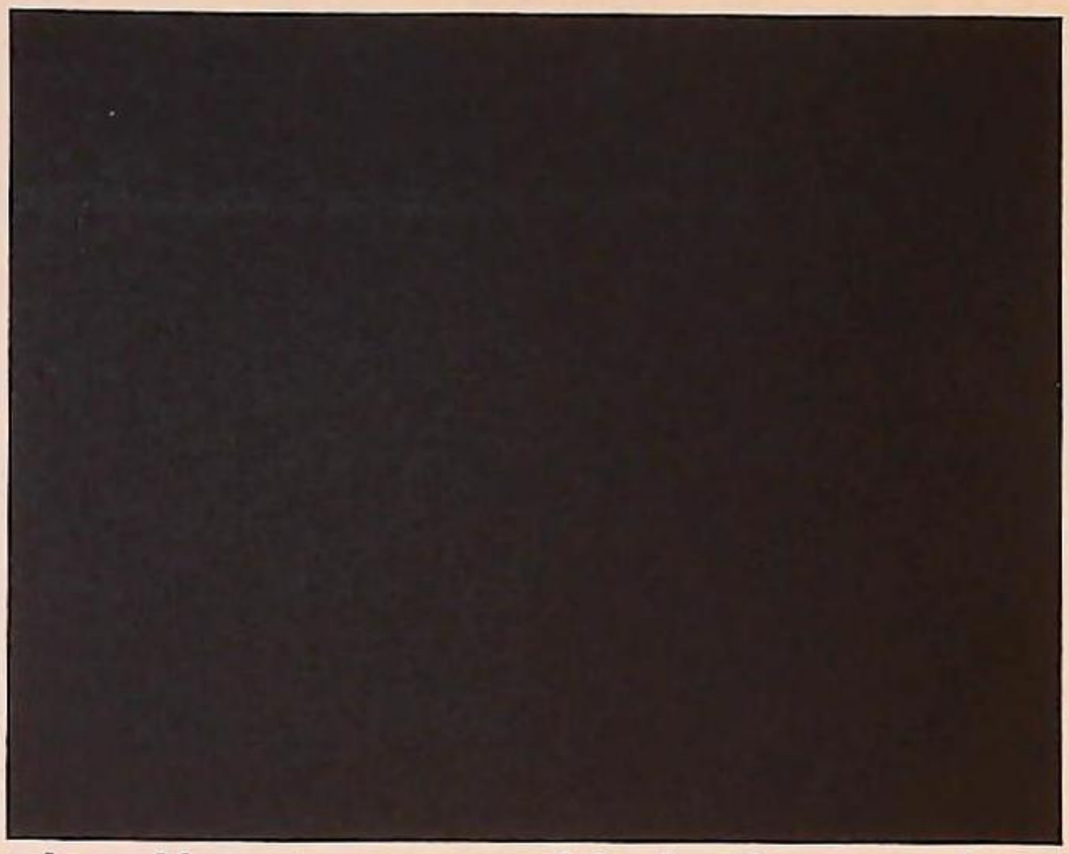
some 15-20 meters up, while they continued to watch the animal. Whe it came closer they could see it clearly.

Its head was at least two meters wide and the eyes were wide apart. The body was some ten meters long. It was dark-grey in colour. On the back it had a large fin, half a meters high in the front and narrowing towards the back. The creature moved in a jumping manner. Its front part was sometimes over the surface, sometimes under it. When it wa about 100 meters from the shore it stopped, whipped the surface witl its tail, dived and vanished into the depth.



The monster at Lake Vorota resambled the ancient dinosaur Dimetrod

The closest village was 120 km away. The inhabitants, hunters and fisherman, said that the Sordongnokh tablelands and especially the largest of the lakes, Labynkyr (some 15 km long and 60 meters deep) had a bad reputation. A monster lived in it, they claimed.

In 1963 the russians started to send expeditions to the lakes, determinated to solve the riddle. During the first expedition its four members saw an animal breaking the surface on the distance of 800 meters before disappearing again. They couldn´t photograph it, the sun was setting. Next years expedition consisted of morphologis zoologists and divers. They stayed to short, however, to have the tim to see anything. Another group camped by the lake for a month and sa three hump-like objects move in the water some 100 meters from the shore.

Next monster was a long-necked animal with a serpent-like head said inhabit the ice-cold Lake Labinkir in the Siberian province of Yakutia According to Anatoly Pankov, author of "The Oymyakonsky Meridian",

which is about oddities in the region, the first reliable observations comes from the 60´s.

1963 or 1964 witnesses saw a long neck rise from the murky waters. The animal sounded like "a baby crying, shrill and piercing", then div back into the 45 meters deep lake. Other witnesses said they had seen the entire animal swimming under the ice and described it as lizard-like.

Some reindeer owners saw once how the animal threw its neck up through the surface and tried to catch a low-flying bird. Pankov coul also relate about a hunter who had shot a goose and sent his dog into the water to fetch it, and saw the monster surface and first take the bird, then the dog!

In the magazine Komsomalskaya Pravda, from November 21, 1964, ther is an article by G. Rokosuev, in charge of an expedition to Lake Khaiyr by the Leptev Sea in northern Russia, sponsored by Moscow University.

Rokosuev wrote in his report: "Local hunters were so scared for the monster that they refused to guide us to the lake. There are many lak along the river Omoleya and they were all full of fish, but not the monster lake. No wild geese or other birds landed on its surface. Kha freezes much later then the other lakes in the area and according to geological observations, the lake is in a zone where the earth´s crust recently split open".

The lake is 600 by 500 meters but nobody has been able to establish i depth. Strange sounds and large splashes has been heard from of it, b few have seen the monster.

Rather unexpected, however, N.F. Gladkikh, a member of the biological team, got to see the monster of the lake. He more or less stumbled up it! He had gone down to the lake to fetch a bucket of water and was terrified to see the monster on land, seemingly grazing from the high grass on the shore. It had a small head on a long neck, an enormous bo with bluish-black skin and a protrouding dorsal fin.

Gladkikh turned around and ran back to the camp, where he told every what he had seen. When the other members came with him to the lake, armed with both cameras and a rifle, the beast was gone. All that remained to be seen was trampled down grass. They carefully examine the beach, but found no evidence that the animal had eaten off the grass. Back in the camp again, Gladkikh sketched what he had seen and

a moment a photograph of it. The team searching Nessie has been there too, but never found anything.